



Phase 1 | Engagement Summary

# Wake Transit Plan

September 2024



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# 1 OVERVIEW

## Summary

In 2024, Wake Transit Plan (WTP) stakeholders initiated an update to revisit the strategic direction and investment priorities established in the 2016 Wake Transit Plan. This plan—the WTP Update—was designed to include significant public and stakeholder engagement throughout the process.

The first phase of the engagement, which was held during Spring and Summer 2024 was specifically focused on educating stakeholders and the public about the status of the plan and asking for feedback on current investment priorities. While the Phase 1 engagement strategy included several activities, it was centered around a transit priorities survey that asked participants to spend a limited budget across a list of 12 different transit investments. In addition to order of magnitude cost information, participants were also shown information about each investment's potential impact, such as how long it would take to build the project, how it would impact transit ridership and, how the strategy would improve rider safety and comfort, as well as service speed and reliability. A copy of the priorities survey is included in Appendix A.

The survey also included a series of demographic and socioeconomic questions used by Wake Transit Plan Community Engagement team on previous efforts, to better ensure consistency and ability to measure trends in engagement over time. The demographic questions helped the team track responses across key resident groups as well as geographically. The demographic and socioeconomic data analysis was also helpful in identifying differing priorities between some of the key groups. For the purpose of this summary, results will be framed in the context of overall survey responses and responses of regular transit riders. A copy of the demographic questions is included in Appendix B.

The survey was available online between May 6, 2024, and July 23, 2024. People who participated in community engagement activities, including the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, participated in a group transit investment budgeting activity similar to the exercise included in the survey.

### Key Findings

There were several key takeaways from the community in the survey responses:

- Rail is still desirable.
- People want to connect across the region, but also want better connections to Raleigh, Cary and RTP.
- Current bus riders want better service. Specifically, more frequency, longer hours, and service running on more days of the week.

- Improving passenger amenities is important to the community.
- Stakeholders are interested in on-demand and/or microtransit services.

## The Process

First, a Public Engagement Plan (PEP) was created which documented the project understanding, project purpose, and anticipated timeline for all phases of engagement throughout the Wake Transit Plan Update (between 18-24 months, total). The draft PEP was reviewed by the CE Subcommittee on February 2, 2024 and finalized on April 16, 2024.

For Phase 1, three documents were prepared to further outline the strategy for engagement:

- **Level 1 – Equity Analysis** | The Community Engagement (CE) Equity Analysis was used to determine where targeted outreach efforts were required to reach specified population groups within the geographic boundary of Wake County. In the form, each population group, specific locations, and materials and intended outreach methods used were outlined. Using Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (CAMPO's) Community of Concerns (CoC) map, vulnerable populations throughout Wake County were identified. The CoC map utilized American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates (2017 – 2021).
- **Level 2 – GoTriangle Support Request Form** | the purpose of the GoTriangle Support Request Form was to identify general support services from GoTriangle to supplement engagement activities. The general support services included posting on GoForwardNC/Wake social media and websites, One Wake Transit social media, calendar, and blog.
- **Level 2 – Strategy for Engagement Phases document** | the purpose of the Engagement Phase document is to outline the purpose, key audiences, schedule, geographic boundary, and support requested from TPAC partners. At a high-level, this document outlines the anticipated dates of each aspect of engagement including deliverables and support descriptions requested.

The three documents were submitted to CAMPO staff for review and approval on March 15, 2024.





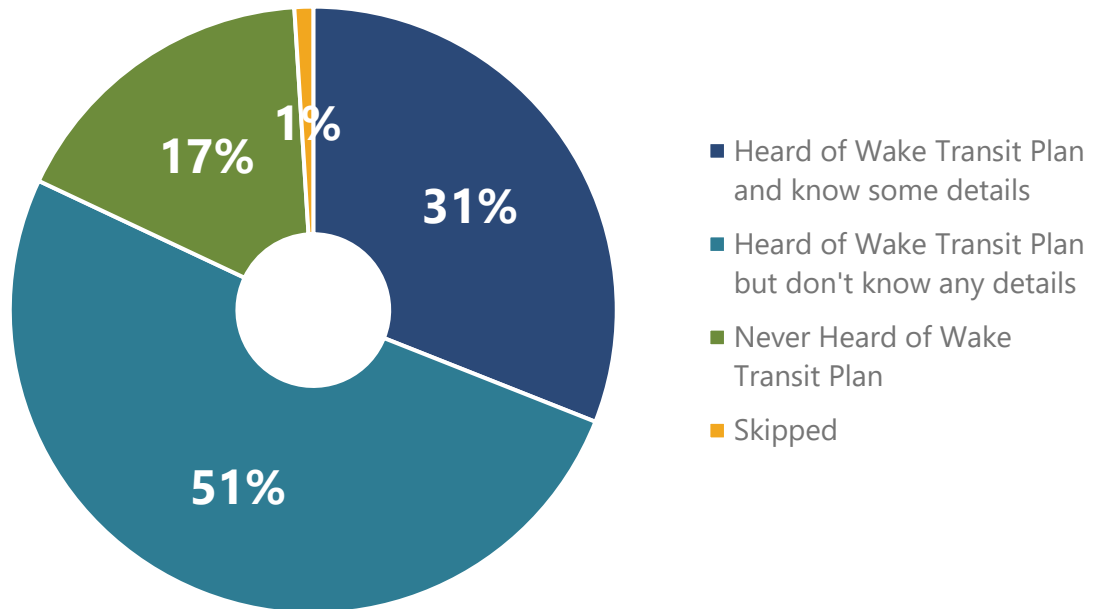
## 2 SURVEY: KEY TAKEAWAYS

### Summary of Findings: Survey

The summary of findings below, outlines the major data points collected by the close date of the survey.

- Approximately 1,900 completed surveys
  - 1,302 completed both demographic and transit priorities sections
  - 1,578 completed priorities section, only
- 51% of the people who took the survey reported they had heard of the Wake Transit Plan but didn't know any details.
- 17% had never heard of the Wake Transit Plan.
- Among the people who completed the survey, 28% are regular or sometimes-users of transit services.

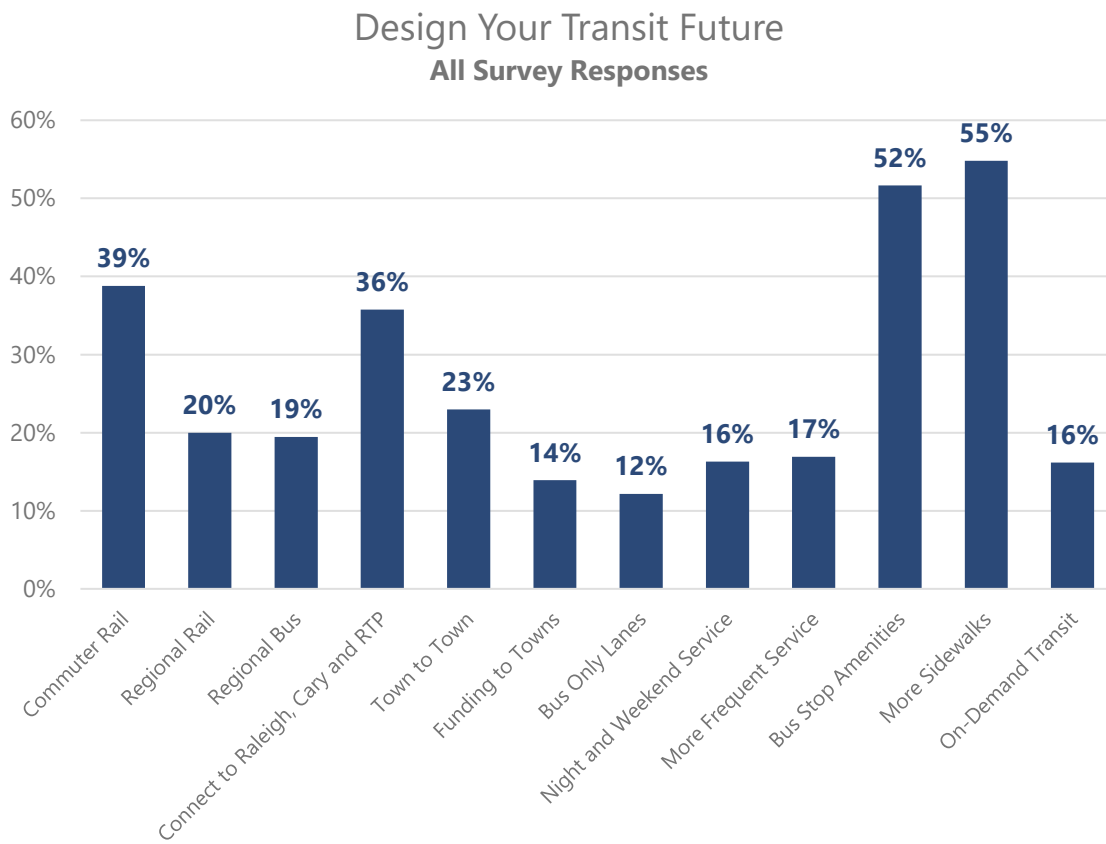
What do you know about the Wake Transit Program?



## Summary of Findings: All Responses

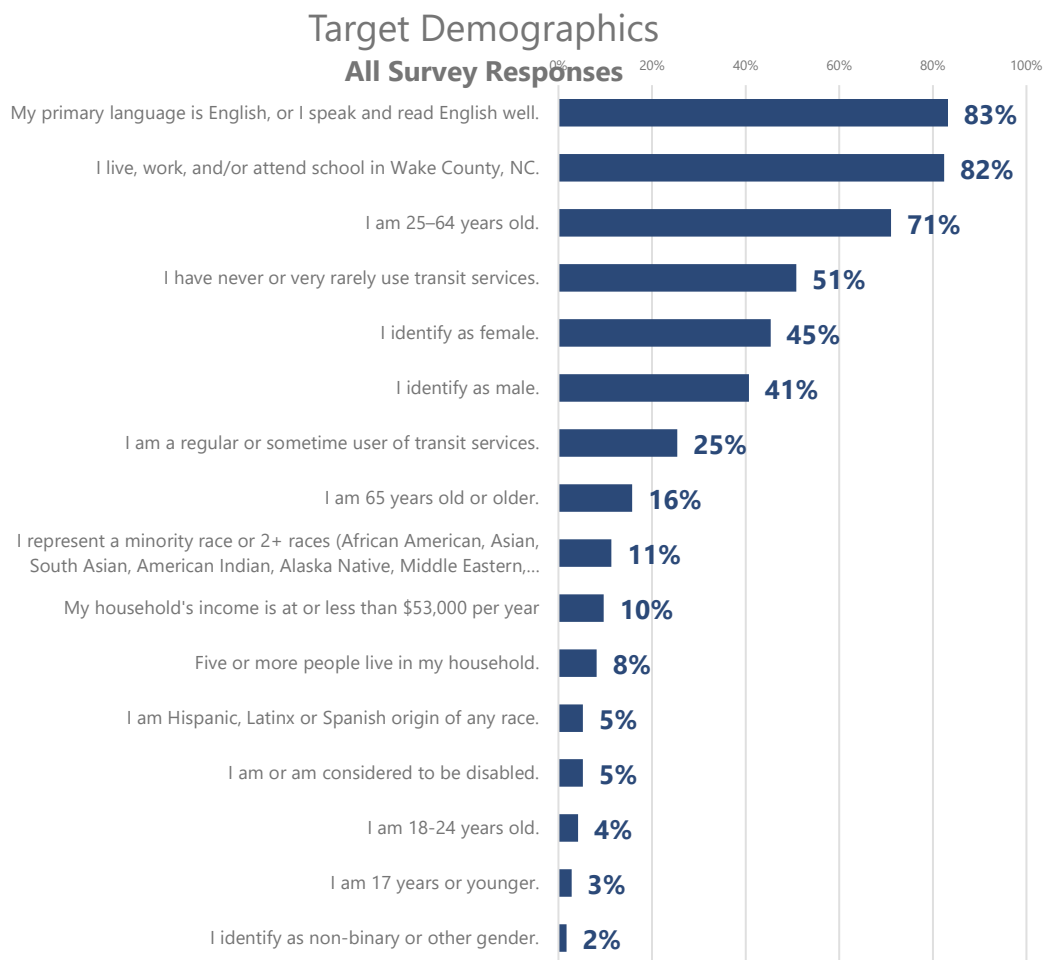
When reviewing the overall sample, regional connections are important to survey respondents. Nearly everyone selected at least one regional connection: commuter rail, connections to Raleigh Cary and RTP and regional rail or bus. The following bullets highlight the summary of all responses received on the survey. The graph below shows how participants allocated \$10 to create their transit future.

- The highest priority investments included:
  - Crosswalks and sidewalks (55%)
  - Bus stop amenities (52%)
  - Connections to regional centers (Raleigh, Cary, and RTP) (36%)
  - Commuter Rail (39%)
- The lowest priority investments included:
  - Bus only lanes (12%)
  - Funding to towns (14%)
  - On-Demand transit (16%)



## Key Demographic Statistics:

- **25%** are regular or sometimes users of transit services
  - 51% have never or rarely use transit services
- **10%** have incomes at or less than \$53,000 per year
  - 7% live in households with 5 or more people
- **16%** are Hispanic or represent a minority race
- **4%** are aged 18 – 24 years and **16%** are aged 60+ years
- **5%** identified as a person with a disability

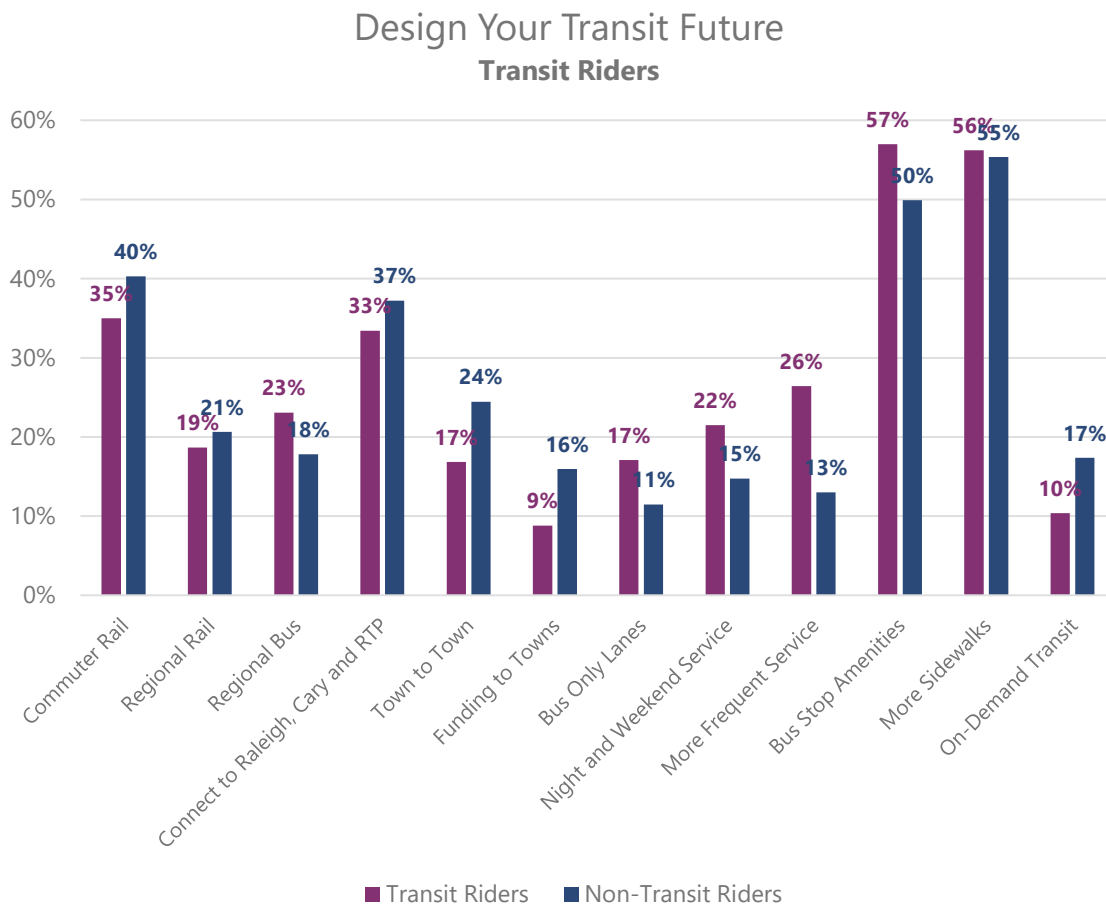




## Summary of Findings: Transit Riders

To better understand the needs of transit riders, data was disaggregated to parse out responses from transit riders. Overall, out of the 1,302 total survey responses, 386 respondents reported using transit, and they notably different priorities compared to the overall sample.

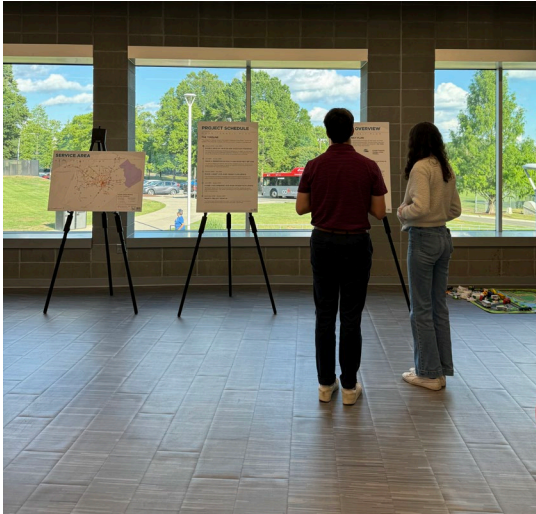
- Transit reliant populations—defined as having at least one of the following characteristics: low income, 5+ households, minority, or Hispanic origin—made up 29% of respondents.
- Generally, transit riders prioritized frequent and off-peak service, improved bus stop amenities, and bus only lanes more than non-transit riders. Transit riders are also slightly less interested in commuter rail and town-to-town connections than non-transit riders.
- Overall, transit riders and transit reliant populations had similar priorities.



### 3 OPEN HOUSE

The open house was held on May 16, 2024 at the Chavis Community Center. The open house was organized as a drop-in format so participants could stop by between 6:00 pm and 8:00 pm to review exhibits, provide input on priorities, and ask staff questions. The following bullets summarize the feedback received from the open house:

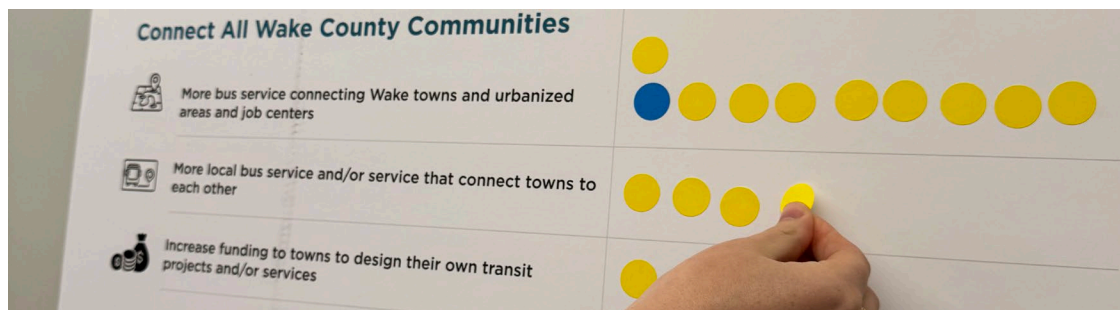
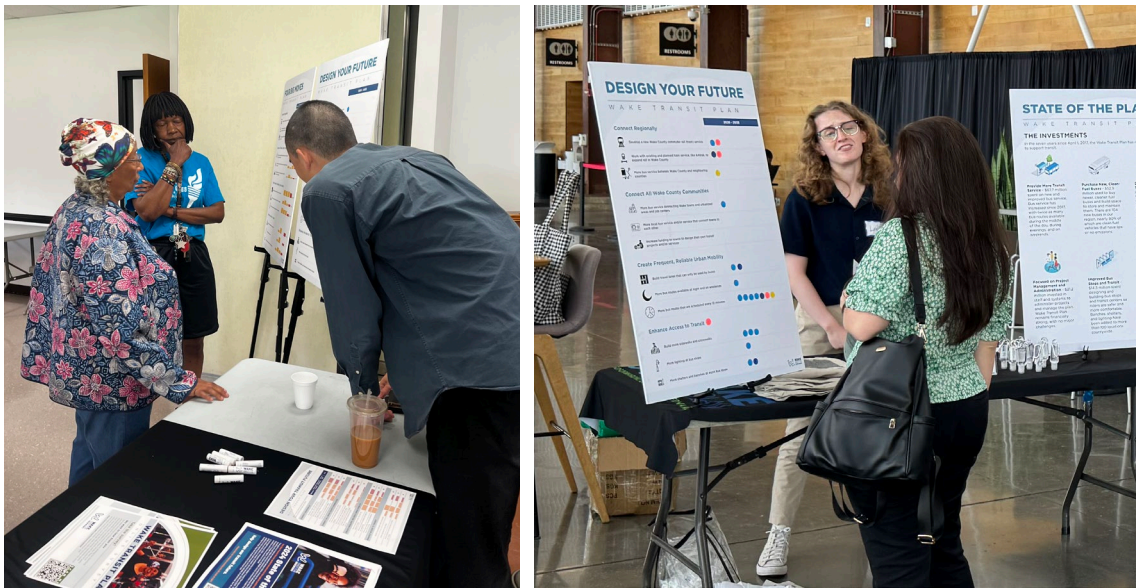
- 11 paper surveys
- 3 comments received
- The top three priorities included:
  - More connections to Wake towns, urbanized areas, and job centers (45%)
  - More town to town bus service (45%)
  - More frequent bus service (45%)



## 4 POP-UP EVENTS

To supplement the online survey and open house, pop-up events were held around Wake County to meet the community in locations where events were already planned. The intent of the pop-up events was to reach a broad range of community members at targeted locations like transit centers and stops, key activity centers and facilities, and community events to bolster participant and spread information about the Wake Transit Plan.

At each pop-up event, an interactive activity was used to facilitate discussion about transit investments and priorities. A series of exhibits helped supplement discussion similar to the information shared at both the open house and online survey. Participants were encouraged to fill out a printed version of the survey and provide additional input on boards. These pop-up events were staffed by a variety of agency partners including staff from the Town of Apex, Town of Cary, Town of Garner, Town of Morrisville, City of Raleigh, Town of Wendell, Town of Zebulon, GoTriangle, and the consultant team. Over 40 events were held between May 3, 2024 and June 20, 2024.



Participants were asked to allocate portions of a \$10 “budget” to transit improvements (simulating the public-facing survey). The prices listed below are illustrative and reflect an order of magnitude relative to \$10. The following summarizes the results of the activity. The total column indicates the people that selected each category.

Category	Price	Total
<b><i>Connect regionally</i></b>		
Develop a new Wake County commuter rail (train service)	\$7	3
Work with existing and planned train service, like Amtrak, to expand rail in Wake County	\$4	5
More bus service between Wake County and neighboring counties	\$3	6
<b><i>Connect all Wake County communities</i></b>		
More bus service connecting Wake towns and urbanized areas and job centers	\$2	10
More local bus service and/or service that connects towns to each other	\$2	9
Increase funding to towns to design their own transit projects and/or services	\$3	7
<b><i>Create frequent, reliable urban mobility</i></b>		
Build travel lanes that can only be used by buses	\$5	0
More bus routes available at night or on weekends	\$3	10
More bus routes that are scheduled every 15 minutes	\$5	8
<b><i>Enhance access to transit</i></b>		
Build more sidewalks and crosswalks	\$2	4
More lighting at bus stops	\$1	14
More shelters and benches at more bus stops	\$1	15
More on-demand transit service, like microtransit, in more places	\$2	0



The following table includes the list of pop-up events held from May 2024 to June 2024.

Event	Location	Date	Staffing
Bike Banaza	510 W Martin St, Raleigh, NC	Friday, May 3, 2024	Raleigh
Peak Fest	Downtown Apex	Saturday, May 4, 2024	Apex
Meet in the Street	350 S White St, Wake Forest, NC	Saturday, May 4, 2024	Wake Tech
NC State	Western Blvd	Thursday, May 9, 2024	GoTriangle
Zebulon Spring Concert Series	1003 N Arendell Ave, Zebulon, NC	Friday, May 10, 2024	Zebulon
Academy Street/Spanish Speaking Festival	316 N. Academy Street, Cary, NC	Saturday, May 11, 2024	Cary
Fuquay-Varina Grower's Market	121 N Main St, Fuquay-Varina, NC	Saturday, May 11, 2024	GoTriangle
Neighborhood Clean-Up	323 Lake Dr, Wendell, NC	Saturday, May 11, 2024	Wendell
Cary Depot	211 N Academy St, Cary, NC 27511	Monday, May 13, 2024	GoTriangle
Public Meeting	505 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd, Raleigh NC	Thursday, May 16, 2024	Consultant Team
District Drive Park and Ride	Raleigh, NC 27607	Thursday, May 16, 2024	GoTriangle
Bike to Work Day	Various Locations	Thursday, May 16, 2024	Raleigh
RTC	901 Slater Road, Durham NC 27703	Friday, May 17, 2024	GoTriangle
Asian American Festival	1030 Richardson Dr, Raleigh, NC	Saturday, May 18, 2024	CAMPO
Garner Night Market	120 East Main Street, Garner, NC	Saturday, May 18, 2024	Consultant Team
Morrisville Springfest	228 Aviation Pkwy, Morrisville NC	Saturday, May 18, 2024	Morrisville + GoTriangle
Zebulon Community Center	301 S Arendell Ave, Zebulon, NC	Monday, May 20, 2024	Consultant Team
South (Wake Tech Campus)	9101 Fayetteville Road, Raleigh, NC	Monday, May 20, 2024	Wake Tech
Northern Wake Senior Center	235 E Holding Ave, Wake Forest, NC 27587	Tuesday, May 21, 2024	Consultant Team
Cary Depot	211 N Academy St, Cary, NC 27511	Wednesday, May 22, 2024	Consultant Team
RTC	901 Slater Road, Durham NC 27703	Wednesday, May 22, 2024	GoTriangle



Event	Location	Date	Staffing
GoRaleigh Station	214 S Blount St, Raleigh, NC 27601	Thursday, May 23, 2024	Consultant Team
NC State	Hillsborough at Brooks	Thursday, May 23, 2024	GoTriangle
Parks Job Fair	514 Method Rd Raleigh, NC 27607	Wednesday, May 29, 2024	Raleigh
Raleigh Downtown Mobility Study	510 W Martin St, Raleigh, NC 20703	Wednesday, May 29, 2024	Consultant Team
Moore Square	201 S Blount Street. Raleigh, NC 27601	Thursday, May 30, 2024	GoTriangle
ZWX Bus Ride		Thursday, May 30, 2024	GoTriangle
Cary Depot	211 N Academy St, Cary, NC 27511	Tuesday, June 4, 2024	GoTriangle
North (Wake Tech Campus)	931 Durham Road Wake Forest, NC 27587	Tuesday, June 4, 2024	Wake Tech
RTC	901 Slater Road, Durham NC 27703	Thursday, June 6, 2024	GoTriangle
Moore Square	201 S Blount Street. Raleigh, NC 27601	Friday, June 7, 2024	GoTriangle
Local Government Career Expo	1101 Gorman St, Raleigh, NC	Saturday, June 8, 2024	Garner
Bike Rodeo	200 Town Hall Dr, Morrisville, NC	Saturday, June 8, 2024	Morrisville
Perry Health Science (Wake Tech Campus)	2901 Holston Lane Raleigh, NC 27610	Monday, June 10, 2024	Wake Tech
RTC	901 Slater Road, Durham NC 27703	Wednesday, June 12, 2024	GoTriangle
Zebulon Juneteenth Kick Off Concert	1003 N Arendell Ave, Zebulon, NC	Friday, June 14, 2024	Consultant Team
Knightdale African American Festival	810 N First Ave, Knightdale, NC	Saturday, June 15, 2024	GoTriangle
Bike Repair Event		Saturday, June 15, 2024	Raleigh
Rolesville Juneteenth	425 Nature Park Dr, Wake Forest, NC 27587	Wednesday, June 19, 2024	Rolesville + GoTriangle
Holly Springs Community Library	300 W Ballentine St, Holly Springs, NC	Thursday, June 20, 2024	GoTriangle
NC State	Hillsborough St	Thursday, June 20, 2024	GoTriangle

# 5 STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) was held on May 22, 2024, at the Chavis Community Center in downtown Raleigh. At the meeting, there were 49 participants representing communities across Wake County. The representatives of Stakeholder Advisory Committee who were invited to attend included:

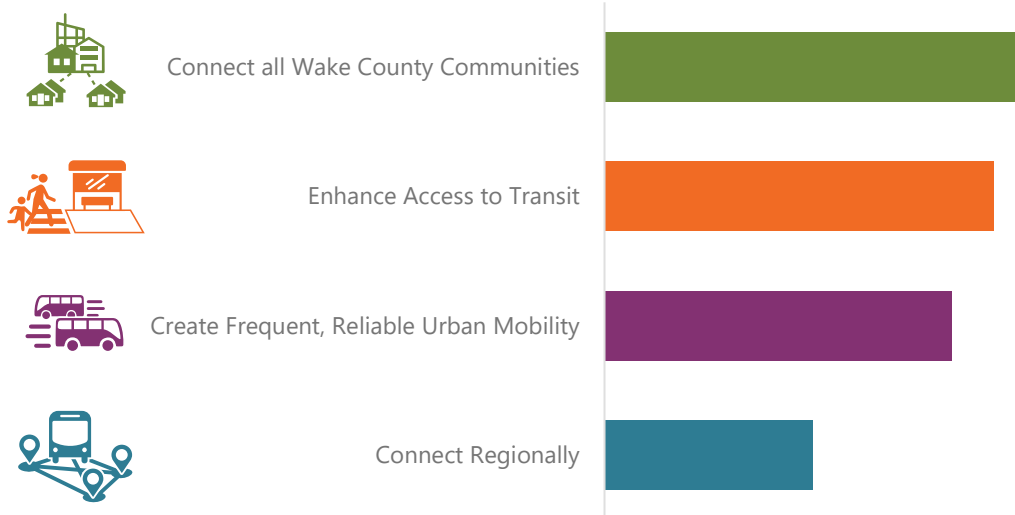
- Apex
- CAMPO
- Cary
- Central Pines Regional Council
- Downtown Raleigh Alliance (DRA)
- Federal Highway Administration
- Fuquay-Varina
- Garner
- GoRaleigh
- GoTriangle
- GoWake Access Transportation
- Holly Springs
- ITRE
- Knightdale
- Morrisville
- NCDOT Division 5
- NCDOT Rail
- NCDOT Transportation Planning Division (TPD)
- NC State University
- Oaks and Spokes
- Raleigh
- Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA)
- Rolesville
- Shaw University
- Wake County
- Wake Forest
- Wake Technical Community College
- WakeUp Wake County
- Wendell
- Zebulon



The purpose of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting was to:

- Review the State of the Wake Transit Plan
- Gather input on Wake Transit Plan priorities
- Share information on up-coming engagement events

Using an interactive online, live polling software called Mentimeter, participants were encouraged to share their agency's perspective on where the Wake Transit Plan has made the most progress.



Stakeholders were also asked what they felt was the biggest challenge facing the Wake Transit Plan. The results of the open-ended responses are summarized below:

- Funding
- Ridership
- Time
- Coordinating with land use/density

Stakeholders were placed into small groups with three-to-five people and asked to allocate portions of a \$10 “budget” to transit improvements (simulating the public-facing survey). The prices listed below are illustrative and reflect an order of magnitude relative to \$10. The following summarizes the results of the activity. The total column indicates the number of groups that selected each category.

Category	Price	Total
<b><i>Connect regionally</i></b>		
Develop a new Wake County commuter rail (train service)	\$7	0
Work with existing and planned train service, like Amtrak, to expand rail in Wake County	\$4	1.5
More bus service between Wake County and neighboring counties	\$3	2
<b><i>Connect all Wake County communities</i></b>		
More bus service connecting Wake towns and urbanized areas and job centers	\$2	5
More local bus service and/or service that connects towns to each other	\$2	5
Increase funding to towns to design their own transit projects and/or services	\$3	2
<b><i>Create frequent, reliable urban mobility</i></b>		
Build travel lanes that can only be used by buses	\$5	4
More bus routes available at night or on weekends	\$3	3
More bus routes that are scheduled every 15 minutes	\$5	4.5
<b><i>Enhance access to transit</i></b>		
Build more sidewalks and crosswalks	\$2	2
More lighting at bus stops	\$1	0
More shelters and benches at more bus stops	\$1	5
More on-demand transit service, like microtransit, in more places	\$2	6



The investments selected most often by the stakeholder small groups are listed below:

- More on-demand transit service, like microtransit, in more places (6)
- More bus service connecting Wake towns and urbanized areas and job centers (5)
- More local bus service and/or service that connects towns to each other (5)
- More shelters and benches at more bus tops (5)





## 6 LESSONS LEARNED

- While advertised public meetings, pop-up events, and engaging key stakeholders are important pieces of a well-rounded outreach effort, social media was found to be one of the most effective tools for the Wake Transit team to get the word out about the survey and the Wake Transit Plan in general. In the second half of the engagement period, survey responses significantly increased with targeted ads, survey pushes on agency rider apps, as well as posts on various platforms with links to the survey.
- Pop-up events proved to be an effective in-person way of reaching target demographic groups to better ensure diverse demographic, socioeconomic, and geographic representation. Events held at the transit centers and senior centers produced some of the highest response and engagement rates.
- Surveys could be reviewed and tested by trusted Wake Transit stakeholders and partners prior to launch, to better ensure questions are worded clearly and that the message and intent of the survey is clear. For example, based on feedback received from stakeholders in the second half of the engagement period, the pricing of bus-only lanes was adjusted in the survey to better align with the pricing difference between rail and bus rapid transit options. The order of demographic questions versus survey questions was also adjusted to increase the response rate of both sets of questions.
- In future phases of outreach:
  - The survey will be formatted in a paper version (to include demographic questions) in addition to being available online.
  - Demographic questions will be asked after the completion of the online survey.
  - Surveys will be reviewed and tested by a select group of key stakeholders and/or Wake Transit partners before launch.